



## *The Overy Papers*

### **Number 22 - You Called me Brother!**

Fraternal Greetings Brethren,

The Basis of this talk is inspired by a paper presented by R.W. Bro. Wayne D. Anderson who at this moment is the District Deputy Grand Master of Frontenac District in Ontario, and I felt it was worth sharing.

Our Craft is a society with secrets, but until recently, the public at large thought it was a secret society.

Our secrets must and will continue to be guarded, but what is needed now is a more general understanding of what Masonry stands for and does, and this need to be available to the ordinary citizen in our community.

As a result of this understanding some of the old myths will be exploited but maybe a better respect for our aims and activities will increase. It should also help to increase our numbers and every additional citizen who joins and commits himself to our notable and ethical movement brings added strength to our society.

This point is stressed by the Scriptural passage of God's command to take a census of the Israelites. But not by means of counting heads. No! Everyone who wished to be counted had to contribute half a shekel, and it was the half-shekels that were counted.

And what was the lesson to us? That we should not be impressed by mere numbers but whether an individual was willing to make a worthwhile contribution to our Fraternity.

So what is the worthwhile contribution that we make as a Mason?

There is a Russian story about a man who is accosted by another who asks him for alms. "I'm sorry, brother," is the reply, "I have nothing and cannot help you". "Don't worry," says the beggar, "you called me 'brother', and that's enough!"

This is the first thing that we learn to do, to call each other "brother". We meet in fellowship, work in harmony and conclude in peace.

We do have our differences, but then that is normal, but we must respect each other despite these differences. We should see each other's virtues and with good humour tolerate each other's faults.

Let us face it we are not angels, far from it, and at times our brotherliness is found wanting, but we should never let ourselves forget that it is good and pleasant to have a brother and to dwell in harmony together.

But more than this, even greater and far more momentous we should know that each one of our fellow men in our community is also a brother, and that to each one of these we should be able to say,

"Brother, I acknowledge you.

Brother, I trust you.

Brother, you can rely on me.

Brother, I honour your dignity.

Brother, I respect your opinion.

Brother, I rejoice in your success.

Brother, I am happy at your happiness.

Brother, I feel your pain.

Brother, I understand your need.

Brother, I support your hand.

Brother, the world needs you.

Brother, I need you.

Brother, even if I have nothing to give you, I will still call you 'brother'."

Someone once described this as the age of the unbrotherhood of man. Where ever you look especially on the television and in the news papers there appears to be an epidemic of immorality wherever you turn. Injustice, exploitation, self-seeking, arrogance, callousness, corruption, victimization, viciousness, violence. No wonder a poet wrote, "A mighty wave of evil is passing over the world."

There is an old allegory located in the Talmud that is the old teaching book of Jewish Law. Obviously someone came up with the idea of using an allegory before us.

It tells the story that before the Great Architect of the Universe created man; he called the angels together and told them what he had in mind and then he asked them "So shall I create man?"

"Create him not!" said the angel of Justice. "He will be unjust towards his brother man; he will injure the weak and exploit the vulnerable!"

"Create him not!" said the angel of Peace, "He will stain the earth with the blood of his brothers; he will spread mischief and discord wherever he goes!"

"Create him not!" said the angel of Truth, "Though You create him in Your image and stamp the impress of truth on his brow, yet he will desecrate Your creation with falsehood and dishonesty!"

Then the angel of **Mercy**, the youngest and dearest of them all, stepped up to the Divine Throne and said, "Father, create him! Make him in your image, as the crowning glory of Creation. When others forsake him, I will be with him. I will touch his heart with pity and make him kind to others weaker than himself.

When he goes astray, turning from the ways of justice, peace and truth, I will gently direct him back again to the upright path, and he will be a brother again to his fellow man!"

The *Great Architect of the Universe*, listened to the voice of **Mercy**, and with **Mercy's** support He created man.

I personally feel that there have been times, possibly quite frequently, when the Almighty was tempted to regret His decision?

When **Justice** was slighted, and the other fellow did not get a fair go.

When people gave in to blackmail and bribery and were decent to others, provided that they belonged to their side, and felt that the rights of others could be trampled on with impunity.

When **Peace** was brushed aside, and even when there was no outright war there was no concern for each other, no understanding of each other, no goodwill and generosity of thought and deed.

When **Truth** was disdained, and the world grew full of broken promises, ambiguous half-truths and hypocritical double-talk.

Maybe you recognise these words of the world today with the daily message of doom spread through newspapers, television and the latest medium *Social Media*.

Yet despite all this the angel of **Mercy** suggested there was a fundamental decency in human beings which would, with her help, at last rouse itself.

And this is where the *Masonic Craft* has a crucial contribution to make.

By learning to call each other "brother", by learning to recognise a brother in every fellow man, *Masonry* will by its attitudes and acts, help to build up the moral fibre of mankind.

Leo Baeck, a saint, scholar and sage, who was imprisoned by the Nazis during the war refused to compromise his dignity or become demoralized. He said on his release, "Some of us were determined to demonstrate that the goodness in man can be victorious over brutality and bestiality".

If we are going to use this impressive service in the midst of this vast assembly as a spur and inspiration to anything, let it be our resolution that we renew our pledge to learn to call each other "brother" and thus to stand at all times, and wherever we may be, for the goodness in man.

If we are going to allow the eventful experiences of these *Masonic* gatherings like tonight to leave a permanent impression, let it be our determination that

Freemasonry throughout the world will find fresh energy to be benevolent in the old ways, and gain a new vigor to seek and adopt new ways to be of service to each other and to our society.

And may the *Great Architect of the Universe*, whose favors we acknowledge in reverence and humility, continue to preserve the *Masonic Order*, by cementing and adorning it with every moral and social virtue.

BE PROUD OF WHO YOU ARE

BE PROUD OF WHAT YOU DO AND

BE PROUD TO BE A MASON.

Thank you and whatever I say may we continue in peace and harmony.

Bro. Bill Overy

Member of the Education Committee of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon.